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GENERAL: For the month of January 2002, open weather allowed extended gleaning of stalk fields by livestock and some field tillage operations by producers, according to the USDA's Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service. Last weeks snow storm halted field operations but brought some of the moisture needed by this year's wheat crop. As of Sunday, snow depth averaged 5 inches across the State. Other producer activities included records keeping work, attending meetings, 2002 crop year preparations, and livestock care.

This release is based on reports and data from county extension educators, FSA county directors, NOAA, and the High Plains Climate Center.

WEATHER: Weekly temperatures averaged from near normals to 18 degrees above normals until the last week of January. The last week averaged 1 to 4 degrees below normals and brought measurable snowfall to many eastern and southern counties.

CROPS: **Wheat** condition declined this past month and rated 1% very poor, 5 poor, 40 fair, 51 good, and 3 excellent, but was still above last year's condition at this time. The recent snow provided cover and moisture for the crop in eastern and southern areas but missed most of the Panhandle. **Hay** and forage supplies were mostly adequate statewide. The open weather has allowed producers to limit the feeding of hay supplies.

LIVESTOCK: **Cattle and calves** condition rated 12% fair, 70 good, and 18 excellent. Supplemental feeding requirements have been less than normal as cattle were able to graze pastures and utilize stalk fields through most of the month. Calving has begun across the State with 6% calved to date.

The following comments are from Nebraska's County Extension Educators and FSA County Executive Directors:

NORTHWEST

CHEYENNE: Producers are doing taxes and attending meetings. Wheat condition is good, but needs moisture.

DAWES: Ranchers just starting to calve.

SCOTTS BLUFF: Dry winter conditions continue through the month, cattle are making good use of corn stalks.

NORTH CENTRAL

HOLT/BOYD: Wheat is badly in need of more snow cover and moisture. Cattle are in good condition due to the mild winter and good feed supplies.

NORTHEAST

ANTELOPE: Producers are hauling grain. Snow fall was about 5 to 6 inches. Cattle are still on stalks. Cattle condition is good because of warm conditions for most of the winter. Weight gain on fat cattle has been above average.

BOONE: Calving is just getting started. Hay supplies are very good because of the open winter and prices have been dropping.

KNOX: The recent weather has been some of the mildest ever. Great utilization has been achieved from corn stalks.

THURSTON: The largest major snowstorm of the year hit on Thursday. Cow-calf ranchers will start to feed hay at a higher rate.

CENTRAL

HALL: The weather has been great for the cow/calf producer, but not so good for the wheat producer.

EAST CENTRAL

DODGE: Due to the mild winter, existing hay supplies are more than adequate.

LANCASTER: Received first significant snowfall in over 60 days. This snow will help the wheat.

MERRICK: We had our first "real" snowfall today (Thursday). Up to now the cattle producers have enjoyed grazing stocks resulting in feeding less hay/silage. Most producers are busy now with income tax work and making financial arrangements for 2002.

NANCE/BOONE: Open winter conditions have taken pressure off of feed supplies in the area. A few producers are starting to calve.

SOUTHWEST

FRONTIER: A few cattle producers have started to calve. The mild temperatures have caused the wheat to deteriorate as of this time.

HAYES: The winter has been very dry with above normal temperatures. Wheat and pastures need moisture.

KEITH/ARTHUR/GARDEN: Winter wheat is suffering from the lack of moisture during the last several months. The weather has been good for the cattle on feed and cows have wintered well; feed supplies are good.

FURNAS: The snow gave us much needed protection and moisture for the wheat. Calving is just getting started in our area.

SOUTH CENTRAL

HARLAN: Until yesterday (31st) we had a very open winter. Many cows have been grazing in the pastures, as well as stalk residue.

WEBSTER: Moisture is still a grave concern. Pasture ponds are drying up and could be a real problem without adequate water.

Calving just getting started. Storm made it rough for a few days.

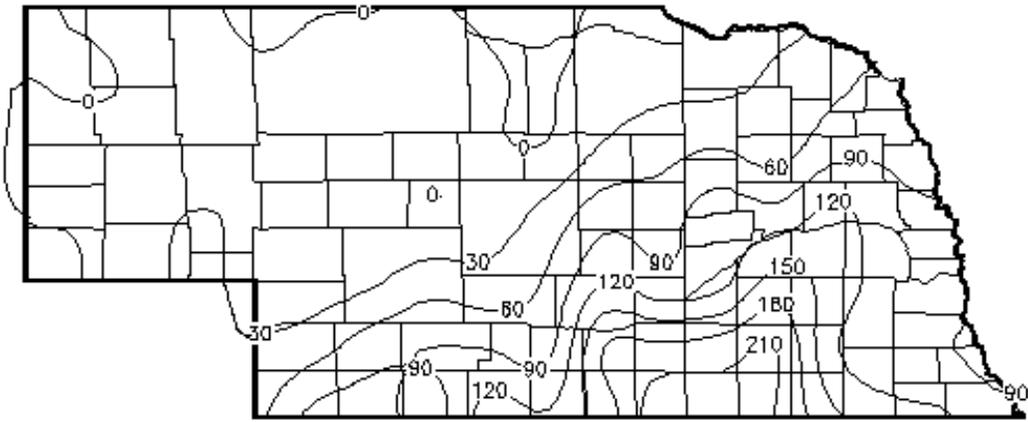
SOUTHEAST

GAGE: Open winter until this week has allowed farmers to work outside.

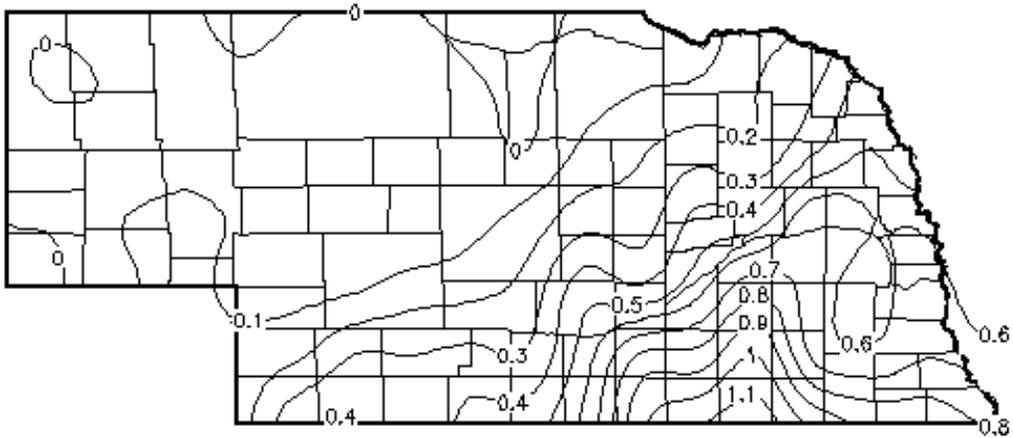
OTOE: Several inches of snow were received last week. The moisture is needed.

PAWNEE: Received the first big storm of winter, moisture was badly needed. Wheat overall looking good for as dry as it had been. A week ago some were in the field chopping stalks and discing getting ready for this spring.

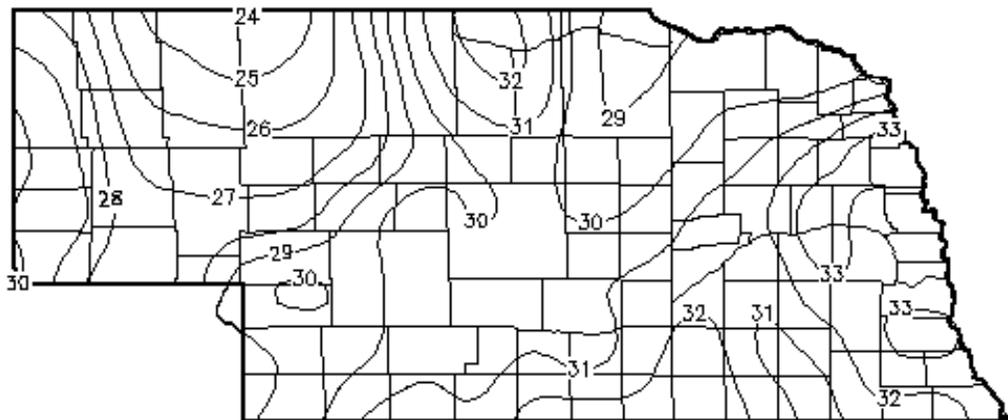
PRECIPITATION AS PERCENT OF NORMAL FOR JANUARY 2002¹



PRECIPITATION IN INCHES FOR MONTH OF JANUARY 2002¹



SEVEN DAY AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AT THE FOUR INCH DEPTH UNDER BARE SOIL¹



¹ Source: High Plains Regional Climate Centers Automated Weather Data Network (AWDN).

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